



The External Shirker

Translator's Note

This text, which was apparently separately published in mid-1915 and is preserved in the Paris Archives de la préfecture de police, is attributed to E. Armand in *Les En-dehors: Anarchistes individualistes et illégalistes à la "Belle Époque."* It is noted as a response to an article in *La Guerre Sociale* denouncing the embusqués (wartime shirkers), after that paper turned from antimilitarism to support for the Union Sacrée. This apparently incomplete (and perhaps not entirely reliable?) transcription has circulated online and in pamphlet form under Armand's name. There is nothing about the prose that strikes me as particularly characteristic of Armand's writing and some elements that make me doubt the attribution. But it is certainly an interesting document.

- Shawn Wilbur, 2020

It's me—the eternal shirker, the chronic dodger, the perpetual slacker. For I am always unconcerned with being French or German, Austrian or Italian, English or Turkish, Russian or Japanese.

I am the one without a homeland, without a flag, without borders, without religion, without an ideal.

And the victory of German culture means as little to me as the triumph of Greco-Latin civilization. All barbarism is equal to me: the Belgian barbarism in the Congo and

pool, with water up to my neck, to be crippled by rheumatism or gnawed at by gnout. I hide in the depths of a quarry or hole, far off, in some lost wood. I wonder on some savage speak, isolated from other humans, and come to seek from time to time, in some appomited places, the pitance left there occasionally by a brother shirker.

is imagination to not being a
watcher or led to the
laughinghouse, who has put
that work all that the human
carcely eaten for six months
juniting. Or else I have drunk
after upon litter of intoxicants
and narcotics or debilitants.
or I have swallowed dozens of
pills or tablets. Or I gorged
myself for weeks to the point
of not being able to drag
myself along. Or else I have
overed myself with wounds,
anks to I no longer know
hat saps from I no longer
now which herbs. I have
assed night after night in a

the German barbarism in Belgium, French barbarism in Morocco and Russian barbarism in China, English barbarism in the Indies and Turkish barbarism in Armenia
[...]

I am the bohemian, the vagrant, the wanderer, the outlaw, the one whom one imposes without consulting a place of birth.

I am the grumbler, the nuisance, the killjoy, the spoilsport, the one always trailed by the constabulary, the one for whom there are no

shift and 1% drunkenness. [...]

I am the one who does not wish to risk a millimetre of his precious skin to defend the interests of the rich and maintain the institutions of the privileged.

The one for whom the man in the cassock and the man in uniform, the ape and the consequence, remain the enemy, in times of war as in times of peace. [...]

That's me—the shirker in earnest, the one who has applied all the resources of

more secret in the house of ill
repute on the pediment of
which we read "Liberty.
Fraternity. Equality." with a
period between each word. [...]

I know that no one gives credence to the communiqués and that everyone laughs at the official speeches.

I know that everyone has had their fill of war and that, without pressure, we would hardly find any “defenders of the homeland.”

I know that, on analysis, glory can be broken down into 99%